

REMARKS

This Amendment seeks to place this application in condition for allowance. Claims 151-210 are pending. All of the Examiner's rejections have been addressed. Some of the pending claims have been amended to improve clarity and/or antecedence. No new matter has been added.

OFFICE ACTION

In the Office Action dated August 19, 2003 (hereinafter, "the OFFICE ACTION"), claim 168 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, based on lack of positive antecedence and claims 151-167 and 169-197 were found to be allowable. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's helpful comment and, as the Examiner suggested, have amended claim 168 to depend from claim 167.

It should be noted that the Office Action did not acknowledge the Third Supplemental Preliminary Amendment dated December 11, 2002, which added claims 198-210. Applicants respectfully request examination of these claims.

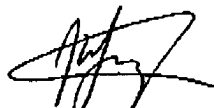


Conclusion

Applicants request reconsideration of the instant application in view of the foregoing remarks and amendments. Applicants submit that the pending claims present patentable subject matter. Accordingly, allowance of all of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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